(c) The new norms for examination of export goods have already come into force *w.e.f.* 23.1.2002.

Branches of Public sector banks in Foreign Countries

3696. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for public sector banks having very few branches in foreign countries-whercas the foreign banks arc mushrooming their branches here on a large scale;

(b) whether Government propose to give free hand to Indian Banks to open their branches abroad so as to get them the benefits of liberalisation; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Requests from foreign banks for opening of branches in India arc examined on merit based on various parameters and approval is granted by RBI and the Intcr-Departmental Committee set up by Government of India for the purpose. At present 40 Foreign Banks incorporated in different countries have 192 branches in India.

(b) and (c) Opening of a branch abroad by any Indian bank is a business proposition emanating from the bank itself. The permission of RBI/Government of India aims at ensuring that only banks which have capacity to survive in a competitive global market arc allowed presence abroad. The proposals received from the banks arc examined keeping in view various performance parameters etc. At present Indian Banks have 94 branches in foreign countries.